

Message Text

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USEC FOR ERDA REP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, BENC, EI

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: PROPOSED NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

REFS: A) STATE 172450; B) DUBLIN 229; C) 77 DUBLIN 2494

D) DUBLIN 1247;

1. GOVERNMENT AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD SPOKESMEN (INCLUDING MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND ENERGY O'MALLEY AND ESB CHAIRMAN DILLON) HAVE CONTINUED OVER LAST SIX MONTHS SINCE REF B TO PUBLICLY ADVOCATE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR PLANT IN IRELAND AND TO HINT AT EARLY FORMAL DECISION. PERHAPS DUE TO A VOCAL IF RELATIVELY SMALL MINORITY WHICH IS ACTIVELY OPPOSING THE NUCLEAR PLANT OR INSISTING ON FURTHER STUDY OF ITS POSSIBLE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RAMIFICATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO PUBLISH A GREEN PAPER ON OVERALL ENERGY POLICY BEFORE MAKING ANY ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE NUCLEAR OPTION. (ANOTHER POSSIBLE REASON FOR THE PROCRASTINATION IS TO AWAIT RESULTS OF THE LARGE -- BY IRISH STANDARDS -- HYDROCARBON EXPLORATION EFFORT UNDERWAY THIS YEAR, WITH 16 TO 18 DRILLINGS EXPECTED). THE GREEN PAPER

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(IN THE WORDS OF A DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND ENERGY OFFICIAL) "HAS BEEN ON THE VERGE OF BEING PUBLISHED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS". IT NOW APPEARS THAT IT WILL REMAIN ON THE VERGE FOR SEVERAL MORE WEEKS, AND THAT A FIRM, UNEQUIVOCAL GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE NUCLEAR PLANT WILL NOT BE FORTHCOMING FOR A FEW MONTHS AFTER ITS PUBLICATION.

2. AN ESB CONTACT CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH THE NUCLEAR PROJECT PREDICTS THAT THE GREEN PAPER WILL SERVE AS A "LETTER OF INTENT" AND WILL SET OUT A STRONG ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE NUCLEAR PLANT. UNLESS CURRENT HYDROCARBON EXPLORATION (SEE REF D) PROVIDES FAVORABLE ALTERNATIVE, ESB OFFICIALS MAINTAIN THAT A DIVERSIFIED STRATEGY BASED ON BOTH COAL AND NUCLEAR POWER IS THE ONLY FEASIBLE OPTION FOR INSURING A SECURE SUPPLY OF ENERGY TO MEET POST-1985 NEEDS IMPLIED BY IRELAND'S AMBITIOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGETS. ACCORDING TO ESB CONTACTS, TENTATIVE PLANS CALL FOR THE COMPLETION OF IRELAND'S FIRST NUCLEAR PLANT BY 1987, WITH TENDER INVITATIONS SCHEDULED TO GO OUT AROUND JULY 1979, RESPONSES REQUIRED BY JANUARY, 1980 AND CONTRACTOR SELECTION BY MID-1980. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT ONLY SIX OR SEVEN CONCERN WILL BE INVITED TO BID, AMONG THEM SEVERAL US FIRMS INCLUDING WESTINGHOUSE, GE AND SOME OF THEIR EUROPEAN LICENSEES.

3. THE EMBASSY WOULD ENCOURAGE INTERESTED US FIRMS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH ESB. AT WORKING LEVEL WE WOULD SUGGEST SEAN F. COAKLEY, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER, PROJECT DEPARTMENT, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD, 18/20 STEPHEN'S COURT, DUBLIN 2; FOR TOP LEVEL CONTACT J.J. KELLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY UNCLASSIFIED

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BOARD, 27 LOWER FITZWILLIAM STREET, DUBLIN 2. CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WOULD BE LESS USEFUL THAN WITH ESB ON QUESTIONS RELATING TO EQUIPMENT SUPPLY, BUT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE ON ENERGY POLICY. BEST CONTACT ON NUCLEAR ISSUE WOULD BE SEAN COLLINS, PRINCIPAL, ENERGY DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND ENERGY, KILDARE STREET, DUBLIN 2. FOR HIGH LEVEL CONTACT WE SUGGEST J.C. HOLLOWAY, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY COMMERCE AND ENERGY, SAME ADDRESS. RENDAHL

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